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#### Did the Commission Intend to Evade the Law?

From recent utterances attributed to some of the people connected with the Rapid Transit Commission, it looks as though the Commission intended from the first to evade the plain requirements of the act creating it, in respect of the bond to be given by the contractors for the work.

Section 34 of the Rapid Transit act distinctly directs the Commission to make a contract not only for the construction of the projected road, but also for its equipment, maintenance, and operation. The operation is to be for a term of not less than thirty-five nor more than fifty years and the contractors are to pay, as an annual rental for the use of the road, the interest on the bonds issued to provide for its construction, with the addition of 1 per cent. annually as a sinking fund for the payment of the principal. To secure the city, the contractors are to give a bond for the fulfilment of their contract, which, it is expressly said, shall run until the end of the term for which the contract is made. Assuming the amount of the bonds issued by the city to be \$35,000,000, and the rate of interest on them 3 per cent., the annual rental required would be 4 per cent, on \$35,000,000, which comes to \$1,400,000, and in thirty-five years would amount to \$49,000,000. For securing the payment of this sum the bond of \$15,000,000 stipulated for by the Supreme Court is too small, instead of being too large.

In the face of this plain provision of the law, President Onn of the Commission is credited with saying that if the bond required of the contractors is to cover the eriod of operation and maintenance of the road, it will be impossible to find a contractor who will give it. Secretary DELAFIELD is reported as saying it would undo all the work of the Commission and practically end the scheme of rapid transit. Mr. BOARDMAN, of counsel, goes farther, and declares it to be only just to assume that the law does not require the bond to cover the full period of the thirtyfive or fifty years of the lease. "It would," he says, " be virtually demanding that the contractor guarantee the city against loss in the operation of the road." Of course it would, and that is exactly what the act intended it should do.

Knowing, as they must have known from the beginning, just what they know now, the Commission has, nevertheless, gone on with its work and strained every nerve to put itself in a position to make a contract for the construction and operation of the projected tunnel railroad. Did its members intend to comply honestly with the provisions of section 34 of the Rapid Transit act, or did they intend to evade them by taking as security for the payment of the \$49,000,000 rental a bond in a trifling amount? If they intended to comply, they should have stopped operations until they got the section amended; if they did not, as apparently they did not, they have been virtually practising a fraud upon their fellow citizens, for which no terms of reprobation

Luckily, neither the Commission nor even the Supreme Court can abrogate an act of the Legislature; and if, as is now conceded. the tunnel cannot be built under the present provisions of the act authorizing it, it will never be built at all. The contract for constructing the road is not divisible from that for operating it, and the bond that secures the city against loss in constructing it must also cover loss from its operation.

# The Russians and Port Arthur.

Our London correspondent suggests as the basis of Russia's reported intention to keep her fleet at Port Arthur this winter. that she does not propose to leave Germany to initiate the partition of China.

It becomes, in fact, more and more clear that Russia, as a country bordering on China, assumes the right of exercising a controlling influence on the latter's relations with other powers. This assumption she made painfully evident to Japan, when she interfered in the latter's projects on the Chinese mainland, and drove her out of the region where she now proposes to winter her own fleet. On a similar ground, whether she does or does not have a complete agreement with Germany regarding the latter's enterprise at Kino Chou, she cannot see a performance so momentous carried out without being near at hand to watch that it does not go beyond the limits which her own interests prescribe.

Perhaps this is as far as it is safe to go. at present, in interpreting the reported purpose of Russia to winter her fleet at Port Arthur. With Germany actually holding adverse possession at Kiao Chou, and Prince HENRY's squadron sent out with such a flourish of trumpets, it would be strange should Russia leave her own fleet to be frozen up at Vladivostock, when it might be needed further south. But whatever she does at Port Arthur will doubtless appear to be with China's consent; for it suits Russia's purposes to act as a protecting friend for China as for Turkey, and each country probably at once covets her friendship and dreads its possible price.

Postal Savings Banks and Panics. If Congress should decide that the Government may properly take charge of the savings of the people, agreeing to pay thereon 2 or 3 per cent. interest, it is not impossible that within a very short period the deposits will amount to hundreds of

millions of dollars. In reply to a recent inquiry as to what he should do with these deposits in order to make them earn interest together with the expenses incident to their collection and custody, the ingenious head of the Post Office Department pointed out that the Government is now paying in the form of rent for Post Offices alone the very large sum of \$1,300,000 annually, and that the deposits could be used profitably in the crection of new buildings, with the result of saving a large part of this sum to the United States Treasury every year.

So far so good; but suppose that just about the time Mr. Gany had all his new

Post Offices ready to do business, the depositors, out of whose savings they had been built, should put in a demand for their quarters and half dollars, how could he satisfy them? On what fund could he draw to pay them? To ask the question is to answer it. There would be no fund at his disposal, and all be could do would be to fall back on Congress, and have the deposits made good through the form of increased taxation or the issue of a new loan. To meet sudden demands or crises of this character the ordinary well-regulated savings institutions have their surplus funds to fall back on, besides the securities and mortgages in which the moneys intrusted to them have been invested. If the Treasury had a surplus of billions of dollars, no Secretary could allow a penny of it to be used for such a purpose without the specific

authority of Congress. It may be that Mr. GARY has in contem plation the printing of bonds, principal and interest payable in gold, to be issued against the nickels and dimes left with his Postmasters by men, women and "children over ten years old." If that is the programme, it is not a system of finance that would commend itself to any one except an interested silver mine owner.

The proper function of the Government i to enact such legislation as will make savings possible and not to worry itself about their collection and investment,

"Were we directed from Washington, said JEFFERSON, "when to sow and whe to reap, we should soon want bread."

### Nine, Fifty-three, Naught.

Eight men, of nine picked out by nobod in particular and by few in general, get to gether in the Windsor Hotel. They want room. Most people who had heard of the Nine supposed that they would meet in the Madison Square Garden.

Eight of the nine men, picked out by no body in particular and by few in general, meet at the Windsor Hotel and appoint fifty-three men, who will have the pleasure of meeting at the Windsor to-morrow and forming a new Republican "organization.

A fine constitution the fifty-three can get up, and excellent by-laws. No feeling heart doubts that the new organization, consisting at present of sixty-two men at the outside, and all very much outside, is able to make or borrow a constitution and bylaws that will look really romantic in red morocco, with gilt top, gilt letters on the back, and a medallion of the Hon, WILLIAM Lysong Strong, eating tobacco, on the top cover. Primaries it can get, and secondaries, and enrollments and reënrollments as long as it has the price. These are not the essentials of a party, as the Nine seen to suppose. A party needs members; and where are the Short Nines of the Windsor

to find them ? As a matter of sound political figuring it can be proved that 9 plus 53 equals 0. We commend this proposition to Gen. SAM THOMAS of the Short Nines. He is used to looking at figures.

#### England's Iron Spinal Cord Through Africa.

What may be termed gratified enmity is the predominant note in the pæans of triumph with which the English press has greeted the completion of the railway that brings Buluwayo into direct communication with Cape Town. It is no doubt a remarkable achievement even in this age of rapid progress. It seems but a few months ago that we were reading of the doings of King LOBENGULA and his stalwart Matabele warriors, and to-day they are only shadows

The spirits of the kingly savage and his warriors and the shades of their ancestors hardly have had time to dissociate themselves from their earthly surroundings, yet the shriek of the locomotive already echoes through their mountains, the advance guard of the incoming races that will supplant the old. But the development is forced and unnatural. It was not called for by pressure of population from behind, but is solely for purposes of conquest and to gratify racial ambition.

The line from Cape Town to Buluwayo is spoken of as England's "spinal cord" that is to run through Africa to Cairo on the Nile, and that is to give her the domination of all that immense region. Gratification is expressed that Germany has been forestalled and headed off, and the expectation is confidently expressed that it will break down the policy of President KRU-GER by which the Transvaal was to be ren dered independent of British railways for its trade with the outside world.

It is intimated distinctly that the line selected for the railroad has military objects in view. One writer describes it as a bristling iron fence against the western boundary of the Boers' country, which it hugs with suspicious closeness. From Kimberley to Palapye it furnishes a number of bases from which columns may easily start to concentrate on Pretoria. There are Vryburg, Mafeking, Pitsani, and Palapye, to all of which troops can now be moved

from Capetown within a week. It was thought remarkable that President KRUGER and other prominent Boers absented themselves, although invited to the festivities of the occasion; but it is only a short time since the Jameson raid, and the Boers have good memories and a keen appreciation of the possibilities in so wild a region. One writer says that "Oom PAUL is evidently fearful of the use to which Mr. Rhodes's railway may be put," and admits that "he has good ground for his suspicions." That being so, it is hardly a matter of surprise that the Boers stayed way from a gathering to rejoice over the completion of an enterprise avowedly aimed at the destruction of their cherished

independence. The Cape Town-Buluwayo Railway, however, is not the only bristling iron fence with which the British are inclosing the Transvaal. Another line on the north, which starts from the mouth of the Pungwe River at Beira on the Portuguese Mozam bique coast and goes to Salisbury in Mashonaland, will soon be in running order, and in the course of time will be connected with Buluwayo. In this way the Transvaal will be encircled completely on land, while its only outlet on the seacoast lies under the guns of a British squadron. The Portuguese Government, under pressure, has given exceedingly favorable tariff conditions for British goods passing through its territory, and has made treaty arrangements with the British Government by which, should Portugal ever part with its East African colonies, it will cede them to England. This is a case in which England proposes; there is, however, good reason to believe that

and Jameson's flasco has sunk into the Gulf station elsewhere, she may think that

tion whenever it arises.

federated Europe, minus England, intends

to have a say in this very important ques-

inferred from the energy with which they have worked to avenge those disasters to their policy. They have allowed nothing. neither money cost nor considerations of humanity, to stand in the way of the accomplishment of their vengeance. With an activity and persistence that would be laudable if applied to nobler purposes, the English Jingo party has labored to accomplish the destruction of the hated Boers, who on their side have made preparations to defend their homes and their independence with a resolution and a courage that entitle them to the sympathy and admiration of all civilized peoples.

Beef Steer, His Sister, and the Corn. Many things queer and more things good stay in or come out of Kansas. Among the good Kansas things may be numbered the quarterly report of the Hon. F. D. COBURN, Secretary of the Board of Agriculture. The expression, "Beef Steer, his Sister, and the Corn," is a poem with a Kiplingesque sound. A poem grasping facts somewhat as Mr. KIPLING grasps them, is Mr. Conun's exordium in celebration of his State:

"We are told 'all flesh is grass, and the goodling hereof is as the flower of the field." "Nature and men, cooperating, have made Kansas a marvellous blending of pasture and cornfield—the

omain of grasses. "In luxuriance, profusion, nutritious qualities, and economy of production, hers are nowhere surpassed this, whether applied to the corn, blue stem, timothy lovers and blue grass of her eastern hair, or se hums, millet, alfalfa, and unpretentious gramm of the fertile plains and higher altitudes beyond.

The premier prince of all these is Indian corn "From these her meats and milk and wealth are unde; from these annually, for two decades, she ha given to the shambles alone animals having an aver re home value exceeding \$29,000,000, or an aggre rate of \$583,000,000; out of these and by thes future wealth and all it brings of good must largel come. As finished product and raw material they are symbolized in the beef steer, his sister, and the corn to their improvement, best utilization and prope

The conclusion of Mr. Conun's study of Reef Steer, his Sister, and the Corn is that Kansas is to be the second Beef Steer and his Sister capital of the world:

"The reports show with practical unanimity that with her mild, dry winter climate, abundant cheap grains and forage, unequalled transportation facili greatest live stock market of the world, Kansas mube and is the appropriate and most suitable matur-ing ground for not only her own, but the vast num bers of range-reared steers from the Southwest and West, and a large proportion of those native to the plains and valleys of the Northwest as well."

After some years of calamitous Populist ululation. Kansas has come to admit her own exceeding prosperity and to appreciate her great and admirable resources. As in the days when the Populist blizzard was raging, no herald of woe from the realm of the sunflower failed to get an approving audience there or to pour his plaint into many credulous ears elsewhere, so now no tale, however Arabian in its splendor, of the riches of that realm, is too good to be lieve. There is this difference, however, that the heralds of woe were strolling hum bugs, laden with voices, whereas the tales of prosperity are true without discount. Even Populist philosophers exult where they formerly wept and wailed, and despatch, or threaten to despatch, jack rabbits, slain for a bounty of three cents a scalp, to the indigent victims of the plutocracy of the East.

Will Kansas, now decked as to her ideateeming head with crowns of gold eagles and wreaths of certified checks, accept the cordial salutations of the East upon a good fortune so signal, accepting at the same time the heartfelt thanks of such serfs, if any, in these parts as have been made full and happy by eleemosynary jack rabbits? Great is the land of the Beef Steer, his Sister, and the Corn; and from it the once more prominent product, the Crank, is be ing dislodged day by day.

# The Detroit for Hayti.

The orders directing the cruiser Detroit to start for Port au Prince to-day do not contemplate the need of a larger force there, as she is simply to take the place of her sister ship, the Marblehead, which is to visit Navassa and then resume patrol work. But it is plain that the restless ness of Havti, since the German incident. requires watching, and an American vessel will probably be found at Port au Prince during a good part of the winter.

It has become evident that Hayti vaguely hoped that the United States would interfere to save her from abject surrender to Germany, and that when she found no likelihood of such intervention, she collapsed. But hers was clearly not a case under the Monroe doctrine, nor had she recently done anything to tempt us to tender our good offices in her behalf. Some years ago our Government was anxious to secure Mole St. Nicolas as a Gulf naval and coaling station. It was a matter of business, having the advantage of increased trade and employment for the neighborhood. Yet an outery was made in the island itself, as if the place were the entering wedge for appexing all Hayti.

Our Government may not have been greatly flattered at finding that becoming a part of the United States was looked apon with disfavor and dread by the Black Republic. As our country seems to us good enough to belong to, and this opinion has been shared by such applicants for admission as Hawaii and St. Thomas, the an tipathy aroused in the Black Republic at the remote contingency of being coaxed or forced into the American Union was not quite appreciated here. It is true that the Haytian Constitution forbids the alienation of territory, but public or official sentiment seemed to block the way even to our leasing Mole St. Nicolas, under ultimate Haytian sovereignty, or to a grant like that which Hawaii made to us in the case of

Pearl Harbor. We do not say that, if Hayti had been less shortsighted in this matter, there would have been no compulsion in the Lueders affair. But we do think that, in case of troubles, foreign or domestic, the habitual presence of American war vessels at Mole St. Nicolas would be, on the whole, a source of reliance for law and order, instead of an additional source of anxiety. President Sam is unquestionably glad now to have the Marblehead at Port au Prince, and to know that, when she leaves, the Detroit will take her place.

There was, in fact, an almost ludicrous reminder of Hayti's former fear that we might get from her, for a good round sum, a station at Mole St. Nicolas, with its resulting local benefits, when she wished us to shield her, with our cruisers, from Kaiser WILHELM'S wrath. However, if the presence of the Detroit at Port au Prince, primarily to look after American interests, is also a source of reliance for the preserva tion of order there, Hayti is heartily welcome to it, and perhaps at some time, if we How deeply the memory of Majuba Hill should not meanwhile have acquired a minds of the English Jingo party may be even the lease of Mole St. Nicolas would at

least not be so detrimental to Haytian dignity and the Haytian treasury as her recent experience with Germany.

The Record Was Not Broken. Just before adjourning for the holidays the Senate devoted an hour to passing private pension bills, and ran 138 of them

right off the reel. It was a great performance, easily beat ing two a minute, but it was not a recordbreaker either as to speed or as to total diurnal output.

The annals of the Senate show that on one occasion that body passed 114 bills in 45 minutes, the average time per bill being 23.68 seconds. This beat a previous record of 2414 seconds. But even that performance was outdone by one of 130 bills in 50 minutes, making the splendid time of 23.07 seconds. The merit of this last performance is sometimes impugned on the ground that 14 out of the 130 bills were vetoed. In one of them, for example, the Senate overlooking the fact that the would-be pensioner had twice described, the second time not returning. But it is hardly fair to expect attention to details in turning off twelve dozen bills an hour. The highest claim, however, we have ever seen made for the Senate by those on whose figures the records rest, is that of 80 bills in 30 minutes, bringing the time

down to 2212 seconds. In volume of output there has been nothing of late, so far as we know, to equal the Senate's performance a few days ago of passing over 400 special pensions in one week, out of which the House passed and sent to the President 240 in one day. While, therefore, the Senate's current batch of 138 bills is a fair example of the rapid whirling of the legislative mill, yet if previous efforts were correctly reported, t does not hold the speed record.

#### The Fire Districts.

The term of service of the present Fire Commissioners will terminate on the 31st of December, but they have anticipated the establishment of the Greater New York Fire Department by a new subdivision of the fire districts in this town. Exclusive of the two fire districts in the territory which is to make up the borough of the Bronx, there are now nine fire districts in the city. They vary in size from 145 acres the smallest, otherwise known as "the dry goods district," between Chambers and Houston streets. West Broadway and Elm street, to the largest, 2,416 acres, the Manhattanville and Fort George district, north of One Hundred and Tenth street and west of Eighth avenue.

The present subdivisions have not been made with reference to area or population, but rather to other conditions. The First is the downtown or business district, south of Chambers street; the Second, the shipping and warehouse district on the west side of town, north of Chambers and south of Houston street; the Third is the dry goods district; the Fourth is the populous east side district, north of Chambers and south of Houston; districts Five and Six are between Houston and Fifty-ninth streets, with Twenty-third street as the boun dary line; the Seventh is the distric west of the Central Park, and the Eighth the district east of the Park, north of Fifty-ninth, and south of One Hundred and Tenth street, and the Ninth and Tenth districts are north of One Hundred and Tenth street, Eighth avenue being the dividing line. Under the new division of fire districts, however, the number has been reduced to three, the boundary lines of which seem to have more reference to territorial than to fire lines. The First district includes the whole territory south of Thirteenth street; the Second extends from Thirteenth to Forty-third street; the Third is to be north of Forty-third.

Precisely why these lines of division at Thirteenth and Forty-third streets have been established is not very clear, for they are not ward lines, such as regulate real estate descriptions and valuations made by the city. They are not sectional lines, suc as have superseded the ward lines in official descriptions. They do not conform to any lines of political division, and they do not correspond with the former fire lines, as heretofore established. Nor can they be said to conform with the requirements of the fire service, for there were last year more than twice as many fires in what is to be known hereafter as District 1 as there were in the district to be numbered 2; and in the downtown business neighbor hoods of the city, mostly included within District 1, the losses from fire, of course are much larger than those in the districts of the city occupied by dwelling houses For instance, in the Harlem district, here tofore the Tenth, 325 fires last year entailed a total loss of \$98,000, whereas in the First or business, district, only 202 fires caused to loss of \$320,000.

It is to be presumed, however, that the Fire Commission must have made the change for some reason they are prepared to defend. It is the first of a series of radical sweeping, and multifarious changes which are likely to occur in all municipal departments during the closing days of this month of December, in expectation of the establishment of the new order of things which s to come in with the new year. On and after Jan. 1 there will be a "single-headed" Fire Department.

# The Democratic Caucus and Hawaii

Sensible advice to the Democrats of the House proceeds from the York Gazette: "It is in our judgment seriously to be regretted

of the immediate acquisition of Hawaii, with the express concurrence of all political parties in the United States. "Mr. CLEVELAND's crossing of the Harrison schem

of annexation at the moment of consummation was a gross error for which both he and the party responsible for him have paid dearly. "Should a few gentlemen, empowered for the time to speak for the Democratic party in Congress, un-

n good time find themselves reversed by their con stituents. The Democratic caucus, at any rate, did not declare opposition to annexation. If there is a division of the House on this question the line will not be between Re-

dertake to reverse its historic attitude, they would

publicans and Democrats. It will be between the Americans and the Mugwumps.

Life in Chicago is unusually interesting at present. Whenever a customer enters a store he is ordered to throw up his hands. Naturally he has some difficulty in handling goods. The storekeepers have been "held up too many times. They are playing for safety The department stores sold last week more than 87.000 so-called "Bashi-Bazouk outfits," cor sisting of a repeating rifle, two popguns, a sword cane, a yataghan, a dirk, a cheese knife, and brickbats. The motormen and gripmen wear steel casques and breastplates, and there are swivel guns at the front and rear of each car. Private hansoms protected by steel armor are fashionable. The driver sits in a revolving turret. The only persons who are not afraid togo unarmed are the Aldermen, "John,"

says the Hon. HINKY DINK to the Hon. JOHN Powens, "our cheek will protect us better that

The advocates of the rapid transit tunnel scheme have vociferously insisted, all along, that the profits from operating the tunnel would be amply sufficient, in thirty-five, or at most, fifty years, to pay the cost of constructing it. Now they insist, quite as vociferously, that the risk of loss from operating it is so enormous that bondsmen cannot be found to guarantee the city against such loss!

Look! a new planet fires the Eastern sky, another bard in purple singing gown, with hair wild-waving and with rolling eye, is flashing feet on dazzled Boston town. Here is a plece from one of his pieces:

"Whenever RICHARD CORY went downtown We people on the pavement looked at him;

Clean favored, and imperially slim.

" And he was always quietly arrayed. And he was always human when he talked: But still he fluttered pulses when he said Good morning!' and he glittered when ! walked."

Why did RICHARD CORY go downtown ! Did he live at the South End ! Did he have to work ! Did he ride in one of the new hansome? A hansom in Boston excites more attention than camel tandem would in New York. Imperially slim. Did he diet or take exercise at the Boston Athietic Club† Always quietly arrayed. Good. RICHARD CORY was not the sort of man to ways human when he talked. Must have been a visitor, at least an imported article Why did he flutter pulses when he said "Good morning" Did he have a deep, rich, New England-Conservatory-of-Music voice, or an uneven and a raucous Medford-rum voice? Proba bly people on the pavement were surprised that he did not communicate some imperial message, or address them from the herdic or nanson Some persons can say "Good morning" with an air of giving you 1,000 shares of Calume

But why in the name of all the gods at once did RICHARD CORY glitter as he walked? Ap parently his glittering was not noticeable who he was being driven. Did he have grease on his hair or a gloss on his shirt bosom! Horror horrors, did RICHARD wear diamond pins and things † It is impossible to believe that any gen tleman from sole to crown, and imperially slim ver consented to glitter.

Such consolation as the newspaper advo cates of the hole in the ground can get by railing at the Court, they are getting with practica

The bills proposing to appropriate mone for new public buildings or monument amounted, during the first week of the present session of Congress, to about \$2,500,000. Con-

week is herewith presented:	ia accona
Public building at Manitowoc, Wis	\$75,000
Public building at Durham, N. C	125,000
Public building at Gloversville, N. Y	100,000
Public building at Los Angeles, Cal	250,000
Public building at San Diego, Cal	150,000
Public building at Tacoma, Wash	250,000
Public building at Reno, Nev	50,000
Public building at Eureka, Cal	150,000
Public building at Santa Rosa, Cal	40,000
Increase on building at St. Paul	250,000
New buildings for Naval Academy, An-	
napolis	500,000
Statue of Sengwick in Washington	50,000
Monument to Gen, SMALLWOOD in Balti-	
more	40,000
Public building in Battle Creek, Mich	50,000
Public building in Norwich, Conn	100,000
Monument to Admiral Ponten in Wash-	7.1
Ington	50,000
Public building at Baltimore, Md	1,500,000

Public building at Washington, Pa..... 75,538 Congress has been in session during only twelve working days, and the appropriation bills for building and monumental enterprises already aggregate between six and seven mill ions of dollars. They are coming in at a rate of more than \$500,000 a day.

This actually exceeds the rate at which revenue from customs duties has been coming in to the Treasury during the same period.

Pour out molasses with full hands, and strew the roads with taffy sticks, and let the fountains spout honey. Flowery from the land of flowers, the Florida Times Union rains nose gays upon the path of Dr. GROVER CLEVELAND'S 'triumphal car." and chants the while that "he was a popular idol because he promised to do certain things, and he lost public favor because he insisted on keeping those same pledges." So chants the panegyrist, but History grins coldly d remarks that "the popular idol," that is, the idol of some people, was broken on account of the pledges which he didn't keep. The pledges he kept can be enumerated on the fingers of the Venus of Milo.

Once more a wide veranda of smile is ouilt around the lineaments of the Hon. GEORGE FRED WILLIAMS of Massachusetts. The city of Lynn has rediected that Populist Mayor whose election last year seemed to console Mr. Wil. LIAMS for the woes of Bryanism. Lynn is safe even if Hull is lost; and so the country can prepare and coax its Christmas appetite.

# Once More the Twentieth Century Question

To the Editor of The Sun-Sir: Won't you le know exactly when the twentieth century begins, whether in 1900 or 1901? Your decision is begge for promptly, serving, as it will, to prevent ruption of a hitherto united family. EAST ORANGE, N. J., Dec. 18.

Answered once more in the interests of dome tic peace: The nineteenth century will end and the twentieth century will begin at midnight be ween Dec. 31, 1900, and Jan. 1, 1901. The year 1900 will be the last year of the present century. The year 1901 will be the first year of the twentieth century. This is because there was no year 0. The first century began with the year 1, and consequently included the year 100, The nineteenth century, accordingly, includes the year 1900, A. D.

# The Bectors and the National University.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN-Sir: A letter signed Medicus" in to-day's Sun favors a national university because, as the writer thinks, its graduated do: tors of medicine would be entitled by their diplomas to practice their profession throughout the country: but under what constitutional provision the university would have power to license practitioners within the different States is not pointed out.

It is unfortunate, as your correspondent suggest that lack of uniform standards for iloensing lawyers physicians, and dentists may compel a fully qualt fled practitioner duly licensed in one jurisdict nations upon topics with which he has ceased to be familiar, thus at times putting a youth fresh from its books at an advantage over a skilful practitioner with long experience. Ademonstrator of anatomy in a New England med

cal school once abandoned his intention to practice medicine in New York because he feared he might b "plucked" on examination and would not take chances. Two eminent Judges of an Appellate Court not long ago found themselves unable to answer th questions prepared for the examination for admission to the bar of their own State.

To a great extent the remedy for the disadvantag omplained of lies with examining boards, which can, if they will, take a happy mean between, on the one hand making examinations as lax as those r quired in the good old days when every candidate was successful; and on the other, asking technical or abstruce questions rather to display the examiner's The difficulty in reaching a common standard by examining boards is that the majority of them exact s less degree of qualification than seems adequate to the minority. Thus in dentistry the standard of the New York Examining Board is so much highe than in other States that it decided to withdraw this year from the National Association of Dental Facul ties because of the latter body's rejuction of what required of students.

The "diploms standard" failed not only because

corporations like Buchanan's were organized sojely to manufacture and sell diplomas, but also because institutions with faculities of respectable men too often graduated unqualified students either from good nature or still worse from a deairs to fatten the college treasury and increase the number of students in attendance.

New York, Dec. 16.

THE REVENUE OUTTERS ON PATROL. To Eaw for the Use of Those Vessels to Haras the Cubans and Help Spain.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN-Sir: The reso ution introduced in the Senate on Thursday last by Senator Cannon of Utah, calling on the Secretary of the Treasury for information con cerning the employment of revenue cutters for the surveillance and capture of vessels carry ing arms and munitions of war to the Cubar revolutionists, is most timely.

This practice was inaugurated by the Cleveand Administration, and, like a great many other practices of that unfortunate régime, it s unauthorized by law and inconsistent with our neutral obligations.

The United States Supreme Court, in the case of Wibourg vs. the United States (163 U. S. R., 632), construing the neutrality laws, held: That it is no offence against the taws of the United

States to transport arms, ammunition, and muni-tions of war from this country to any foreign country, whether they are to be used in war or not In such a case the skipper and transporter of the arms, ammunition, and munitions of war only runs the risk of capture and setsure of such arms and con raband of war by the foreign power against whom

he arms were intended to be used. That it is not a crime or offence against the United States, under the neutrality laws of this country, for individuals to leave the country to enlist n foreign military service.

Nor is it important that they (persons leaving the United States for the seat of war) intended to make war as an independent body or in connection with others. Where men go without combination and or ganization to enlist as individuals in a foreign army they do not constitute such "military expedition (forbidden by the statute).

Nor is it an offence against the United States t transport persons out of this country and to land them in foreign countries when such persons had an ntent to enlist in foreign armies. It is no offence against the laws of the United States

to transport persons intending to enlist in foreign armies and munitions of war in the same ship, pro vided those persons had not combined and organized themselves in this country. The propositions thus announced by the St

practice of this Government under all Adminis trations up to the time of Mr. Cieveland. In 1793 President Washington ordered in structions to be issued to Collectors, of which

preme Court are in line with the theory and

the following is a specimen: The purchasing within and exporting from the United States by way of merchandise articles com-monly called contraband, being generally warlike instruments and military stores is free to all the par tles at war, and is not to be interfered with. If our citizens undertake to carry them to any of these par ties, they will be abandoned to the tenalties which

In the same year Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, wrote to the British Minister, Mr

Hammond, as follows: Our citizens have always been free to make, vend, and export arms. It is the constant occupation and livelihood of some of them. To suppress their calling, the only means perhaps of their subsistence, be cause a war exists in foreign and distant countries in which we have no concern, would scarcely be expected. It would be har! in principle and impossible in practice. The law of nations respecting the rights of those at peace, does not require of then

such an internal derangement of their o cupations. Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, wrote

Mr. Becarregas declares that his Government finds itself under the necessity of protesting solemnly against the aggressions which the citizens of the United States are refterating upon the Mexican territory, and of declaring in a positive manner that it will consider as a violation of the treaty of amity the toleration of that course of conduct which he alle. inflicts the inconveniences and injuries of war. The President exceedingly regrets both the sentiment and the manner of this declaration. But it can admit of but one answer. The Government of the United States is a Government of law. The Chief Magistrate, as well as function aries in every other department, is restrained and guided by the Constitution and the law of the land. Neither the Constitution nor the law of the land nor principles known to the usages of modern States authorize him to interdict lawful trade between the United States and Texas, or to prevent or attempt to prevent individuals from leaving the United States

for Texas or any other foreign country. President Pierce in his message to Congress

in December, 1854, said: The laws of the United States do not forbid their itizens to sell to either of the belligerent powers articles contraband of war or to take munitions of war or soldiers on board their private ships for transpor-tation; and although in so doing the individual citizen exposes his property to some of the hazards of war. his acts do not involve any breach of national neutrality nor of themselves implicate the Government. Thus, during the progress of the present war in Europe, our citizens have, without national responsibility, therefore, sold gunpowder and arms to all buyers, regardless of the destination of still continue to be, largely employed by Great Britain and France in transporting troops, provisions, and munitions of war to the principal sent of military operations and in bringing home the sick and unded soldiers; but such use of our mercantile marine is not interdicted by the international or by our municipal law, and therefore does not compromise our neutral relations with Russia.

Mr. Hall, in his treatise on international law,

In 1870, during the Franco-German war, nearly 1,200 Frenchmen embarked at New York in two French ships, the Lafayette and the Ville de Paris, for the purpose of joining the armies of their nation at home. They were not officered or in any way organized; but the vessels were laden with 96,000 rifles and 11,000,000 cartridges. Mr. Fish (Secretary of State) was of opinion that the ships could not be looked upon as intended to be used for hostile pur poses against Germany, the men not being in an efficient state, and the arms and ammunition being in themselves subjects of legitimate commerce.

Mr. Hall adds: "There can be no doubt that the view taken by the Government of the United States was correct." He further states, upon the authority of a letter from Sir Edward Thornton to Lord Granville, that a series of public sales of surplus guns, rifles, and other arms took place at New York. Large quantities were bought by French agents, were taken on board French ships direct from the arsenal at Governor's Island, and were paid for through the French Consuls."

It may be said by the friends of Spain that these precedents, while good as to our relations with belligerents, are not applicable to the case of the Cuban revolution, because our Government has not recognized the Cubans as belliger ents. But the case of Wibourg vs. the United States arose out of an attempt to aid the Cuban cause, and the utterances of the court I have quoted were made in direct connection with the Cuban insurrection.

The Cleveland policy of using the revenue marine, as well as the navy of the United States to assist Spain in the suppression of the revolu tion in Cuba, by cutting off men and supplie from this country, was illegal in its inception and oppressive in its operation. It was not only not neutrality but it was practical alliance with the cause of Spain and despotism against the sause of Cuba and freedom.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.

### Washington's Dying Wish - It Cannot Re From the Atlanta Constitution.

The position which THE SUN takes in regard to the novement for the establishment of a National Uni versity is undoubtedly strong. Since the days of our early American forefathers various institutions of learning have sprung up all over the land, and the institutions in some measure at least have fulfilled the purpose which the proposed National University was purpose wine tae proposed sational three-sity was intensed to accomplish. Again, the varied interests of the dovernment are already too complex and divergent and need to be simplified rather than extended. Still, the movement is rich in particite associations, since it originated almost in the cradle of American liberty itself said received the Indorsement of some of our most illustrious stateshien; and whatever its ultimate fate may be, it is certain that its history invests it with peculiar interest.

From the Lexington, Ky., Herold. A gentleman from Keene yesterday told a reporte of a certain novel method of stealing corn which is now in vogue in that neighborhood. Acting upon the now in vogue in that neighborhood. Acting upon the supposition that the cornfield is being guarded, the thief enters upon "all fours," Reaching the shock he carefully works his way lyte the rentre where there is commonly a cavity, and there begins to fill his sack. Having shucked all he can carry, he crawle out, and until the farmer goes to shuck and haul his corn and finds only fodder, he is none the wises.

ROMAN CATHOLICS AND HERETICS. There May He Hope for the Latter in Spite of

Plus IV.'s Creed.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN-Sir: I noticed in your "Notes and Queries" column of last Sunday's issue that in answering the question: "Is it an essential part of the Catholic faith that none but good Catholics can enter heaven; that all others are barred!" you say, "It is a park of the belief of the Roman Catholic Church that only Roman Catholics can be saved," and the assertion is backed up by an appeal to certain words contained in the creed which bears the name of Pope Pius IV. Now, though your reply is in one sense correct, the words you quote equire explanation or they are liable to be seriously misunderstood. That Catholics regard the Roman Catholic Church as the sole depository of divine truth, and as, therefore, the only way of salvation, is true; but they do not exclude those who, without fault of their own, through the force of early education or whatever other cause, are outside the Church but are yet in good faith. For this reason theo-logians draw a distinction between the body and soul of the Church, i. c., between the outward, visible unity which is manifest to the world and the inward union of souls with Christ by faith and baptism. St. Thomas Aquinas explains that a heretic may be right the end which he professes to propose

in the end which he professes to propose to himself, namely, the profession of Christian truth, but that he errs in his choice of the means which he takes to secure this end, for he refuses to believe one or the other of the articles determined by the Universal Church. The rejection of the Church's teaching, in order to constitute hereay, must be deliberate and pertinacious, and this is the teaching of all theologians.

It is clear, therefore, that such Protestants as are in good faith and are sincerely desirous of knowing the truth are not heretics in the formal sense, inasmuch as they do not pertinaciously repudiate the Church's teaching. Their heresy is material only; i, e., their tenets are in themselves heretical, but those who hold them are not formal heretics. In other words, they do not incur the guilt of heresy and may belong to the soul of the Church.

Trusting that this explanation may commend itself to your readers, I am very faithfully yours, ALEXANDER HENDERSON, P. S. M. MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH, East 115th street, Dec. 13.

THE NAVAL OFFICER'S ACCOUNTS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19 .- A naval officer, or dered to New York on official business, bought a round-trip ticket at the railway station in Washington for \$6.50, the cost of a single-trip ticket. A civilian friend of the officer, who was going to New York with him, paid \$10 for his round-trip ticket.

ticket, while I paid \$10 for mine?" asked the ivillan.
"Naval officers get a half rate," answered the officer, smiling.
"Well, that doesn't do you any good," said the other. "You'll have to put down only \$6.50

the other. "You'll may to put a very in your expense account."

"Not by a jugful," the officer replied. "I get mileage for this trip, and the lighter my expenses the better I am off. It doesn't matter to Uncle Sam whether I pay \$10 or \$6.50 for my "Then you come out away ahead on this

From the St. James's Gazette. A good many rumors have been current lately

paign of parliamentary obstruction which was lately witnessed in the Austrian Releasath, and resulted in the downfall of the Badent ministry, is not without its parallel in the history of othe tegislative boiles. A German bookworm has found the record of a surprising case of paritamentary the record of a surprising case of parliamentary obstruction by talking against time resorted to by no less a man than the stern republican Marcac Cato, and used against the elicator. Calus Julius Cresar, it is the chatty Aulus Gelius, in his "Noctes Atlicen," Ille, IV., cap. X., who tells the story, its nuthority being Atelus Capito. The passage, freely translated, reads thus:

ing Atetus Capito. The passage, freely translated, reads thus:

"The Consul Casar called upon M. Cato to give his vote. Cato was opposed to the measure under discussion being brought to pass, because it seemed to him to be hurtful to the republic. Therefore, with a view of putting off the measure, he began to talk against time, and sought to take up the whole day with his speech. For whenever a Senator was called upon for his opinion, it was his privilege, before giving his vote, to speak on any other subject, before giving his vote, to apeak on any other subject he chose and as long as he pleased. When thesar saw that Cato was going to keep out talking all day, he summoned the apparitor, and commanded him to solre the Senator, who was talking, and carry him to prison. Theretipen the whole Senate arose and escorted Cato to prison. Casar, seeing the blitter feeling aroused by his high-handed act, decisted and set the Senator free."

# Overruling the Appellate Division of the Su-

There is no alternative. Either the court has mishandled their application, or Alexander E. Orr, John Ciaffin, John H. Starin, George L. Rives, Woodbury Langdon, and Charles Stewart Smith have shown themselves to be ignorant of the city's fluancial condition, heedless of the Constitution and the laws, and recklessly eager to plunge New York to its great in-jury into the costlicst undertaking in which it has ever engaged. Is it easier to believe that these emi nent Judges, to whose opinions upon matters of law the community would bow with the respect due to learning and authority, have misjudged a busine question, or that these able, conscientious, and skilful men of business, after months of study, aided by expert engineers and able counsel, have misjudged it?

From the New York Tribune. If the jurisdiction of the court properly extends so far, it might apparently be held to have no limit. If the court is justified in fixing the bond, it might, for aught we see, have imposed any other condition—a maximum bid, for example, or the adoption of a particular motive power, or the resignation of an obnox-lous Commissioner. Its construction of its duty is the more annoying, as we may say with entire respect for the court, by reason of the fact that in general es-timate the learned Judges, admirably qualified as-they are to determine questions of law, are not nearly so well fitted to decide broad! practical questions of business as are many of the sagacious and successful men of affairs whose judgment they distrust.

# Holiday News In Georgia

From the Atlanta Constitution.
Two Literary Suppers will be given Christmas eve. There will be dancing and high tumbling by an ex-circus actor at both.

Uncle Ross Johnson will have an old-time family eunion Christmas Day. His seventeen children and shirty-eight grandchildren will be present. There will be a dinner given at the Town Hall the day before Christmas for the benefit of the Public Fireworks. Come one, come all! Prices reasonable.

Our colored citizens desire us to state that they will have a big Cake Walk Christmas eve, provided they can get subscriptions enough to buy the cake. Confronted by a Condition.

Prom the Detroit Free Press.
"How dreadful in Dr. Smith to marry his cook." "I don't know; probably she had threatened to

Half Rate Railroad Farrs and Mileago That Don't Always Balance Expenses.

"How was it you paid only \$6.50 for your

"Then you come out trip!"
"No, I don't. I'll have to pay all my expenses out of my mileage. If they keep me in New York any length of time I'll be out of pocket."

# London Has Not 1 et Forgetten

in certain circles as to the movements of a notorious person of undoubted literary and dramatic ability, who has lately been released from

matic ability, who has lately been released from prison, and about whom the less said the better—we refer to the author of "Lady Windermere's Fan." From Dieppe be has lately changed his place of residence to Naples. But we regret to learn that at least one leading theatrical entrepreneur has falied to grasp the fact that this dramatist's career at respectable London playhouses must be considered to be closed.

We have unimpenebable authority for stating that a new comedy from the pen of the author of "Lady Windermere's Fan." has just been of fered to and accepted for production by a well-known and popular London manager. That the initial performance of the piece is intended to be delayed for some little while is tolerably certain, and the play is ostensibly written by a man of another name, the public being left to discover his true identity beneath the pseudonym adopted for the occasion. But the title fact is as we have stated may be regarded as authentic.

It may be added that this person was interviewed a few daysace by a reporter for the Parls paper Gil Blus, and in the conversation which resulted he expressed a confident belief that there was hardly anything the British public would not forgive to those who entertained and amused it. In France possibly this cynical dictum may be justified. For among the new plays to be produced in Parls during the precent winter season by the Thédire de L'Œuvre figures one entitled. "Paraon," described as "written directly in French" by this author. But decent recopic in London have their own idea about where a line should be drawn.

the Senator free."
It is evident that Cato, using his Senatorial privilege of talking against time, embeavored to prevent a vote on the measure proposed by the Dictator, Here, then, we find, more than 1000 years ago, a bona fide obstruction speech made in accordance with parliamentary procedure, and, what is equally interesting to know, successfully carried out.

A. M. FORDHAM COLLEGE, Dec. 17, 1897.

preme Court. From the New York Times.